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Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
Curriculum Framework & Instructional Resources Division 1430 N St. Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

To the Attention of:

State Superintendent Tom Torlakson
Tom Adams, Executive Director
Members of the Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education

Dear Sirs:

I write Re History-Social Science Framework Second Field Review Draft (Approved by IQC 20 Nov, 2015).

I am aware that the Bataan Historical Society is seeking changes in the presentation of World War II Pacific History to bring to the attention of students the importance of the Philippines during the Pacific War.

I was born in Manila in 1932 to American parents, which at this time was American territory, and I was living in Manila at the time Pearl Harbor was bombed.

In 1941 Hawaii was NOT a state and its position could be seen as not so far different from that of the Philippine Islands, though they were looking forward to independence in 1946, a commitment that was honored that year.

I witnessed the arrival of the Japanese Army in Manila. Within 24 hours of their arrival I was among the American civilians picked up for internment at the Santo Tomas University campus where we were prisoners for over three years. As Internees we enjoyed help and protection from the population of Manila, without which we would have perished. As long as we enjoyed a connection with the civilians of Manila, we survived adequately. It was when that connection was cut and the Japanese Army took over total control of the camp – and in particular of its food supply – that we were systematically starved and the death rate escalated to multiple deaths from malnutrition daily. That, too, I witnessed, should you be interested.

The majority of the fighting forces of the US Far East (USAFFE) prior to MacArthur's departure from the Philippines were Filipinos. Filipino soldiers outnumbered Americans on the Bataan Death March.

It should be noted that Filipinos were unremitting in their loyalty throughout the war and Filipino guerillas furnished key assistance to American forces when they returned the

Islands in 1944-5. It was a Filipino guerilla who led the First Cavalry to the gates of Santo Tomas, and tragically he was the sole man killed when the gates were crashed and we were liberated.

It is unacceptable that our population today has no knowledge of the relationship of the US to the Philippines. Like Pearl Harbor, the Philippines were American territory, and the bulk of the US forces that attempted to hold the Islands through May 1942 were Filipinos. Nor do they have any understanding of the sacrifices made by Filipinos both in the fighting and in guerrilla support during the years of Japanese domination. It is time to correct this omission.

I hope that shortly the curriculum in at least one state, California, will have corrected this unacceptable gap in knowledge.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Irene WD. Hecht', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Irene WD. Hecht Ph.D.
